



## Citizen Corps Volunteer Material for NOAA Public Alert Radio Program

Citizen Corps Volunteer,

Thank you for choosing to serve your community and your nation by acting as a NOAA Public Alert Radio Program volunteer [also known as NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR)]. The Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) thank you for your participation. Your efforts to help educate school personnel and students about the NOAA Public Alert Radio and to program it correctly enable us to extend the reach of professional technical service. You are protecting school children and making our communities safer. Thank you.

Below are recommended procedures for you to follow to ensure the new radios at the school are set up correctly.

### **Before school visit checklist:**

- Use the public alert website below to familiarize yourself with the overall program:
  - <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov/proginfo.htm>
- Schedule an appointment with appropriate school staff. If possible, include office staff, principals, security officers, science instruction team lead, and emergency preparedness team members. *To identify the main contact at your school, go to:*
  - <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov>
    - Click on the “Register Your Device” button.
    - Click on “Continue to Radio Receipt Certification.”
    - Use the pull down scrolling triangle to select the school's state and county. A list of schools will appear.
    - Select your school and click “Submit Information.”
    - The school's radio recipient (contact person), telephone number, and radio manufacturer will appear.
    - Be sure to then click “No this is not my school” to stop the registration process because we want the radio registered during your school visit if it has not yet been done by the school staff (see below).
- Go to the website:  
[http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov/cc\\_volunteer\\_material.htm](http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov/cc_volunteer_material.htm), click on the EasyStart Guide for Schools and print the appropriate radio model type guide to use during your school visit.
- Get the Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) code number. SAME geographic location codes for the county your school is in can be found at:
  - [www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr)
    - On the left hand column click on the “Station Listings.”



- Click on “County by County Coverage.”
- Click on the appropriate state, look down the list for your COUNTY/CITY/AREA, the SAME Code # is the 6 digit number in the 2<sup>nd</sup> column.

SAME codes can also be obtained by calling (1-888-697-7263).

For future reference, write your school’s SAME geographic location code(s) here:

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- Acquire appropriate batteries for your school’s radio.
  - First Alert WX-167 takes five (5) AA batteries
  - Midland WR-100 takes three (3) AA batteries
  - RadioShack 12-261 takes one (1) 9 volt battery.

### **During school visit checklist:**

- Confirm whether your school’s radio has been registered and, if not, help register the radio at:
  - <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov>
    - Click on the “Register Your Device” button.
    - Click on “Continue to Radio Receipt Certification.”
    - Use the pull down scrolling triangle to select your state and county. A list of schools will appear.
    - Select your school and confirm your selection.
- Demonstrate and provide operational/technical assistance to school staff about the use of the radio. Refer to the manufacturer’s Owner’s Manual and the EasyStart Guide for Schools you printed from the Internet and brought with you. (Recall-- both are available on the website <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov>)
- Describe to the staff how important it is for each school to have emergency plans. If you know about emergency response planning, please offer to help the school develop their plan, or simply refer them to some helpful websites. The emergency planning web sites below have been assembled by Department of Education, NOAA, and the American Red Cross.
  - <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf>
  - <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/lwx/swep/Design-Plan.html>
  - <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/lwx/swep/index.htm>
  - <http://www.redcross.org>
  - <http://www.disastereducation.org>
- Set up the radio to receive the NWR station with the best reception and use the SAME geographic location code to program that radio to alert for the specific county(s)/independent city(s) in which the school district is located.
- It is best for the radio to be located where it can be monitored continually by school staff, but not be overheard by students and visitors. This will minimize



- rumors and speculation. Reception problems can be improved by changing the radio's location, or adding a simple, flat T-shaped antenna, similar to the type used for stereo receivers. For more information, see reference material at <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/mqt/index.php?page=nwr/antenna>.
- Ensure proper batteries are installed and help school staff establish a battery replacement schedule. Suggest they make it part of the start of school-year check off list or choose an annual date for them to mark on their calendars. For example, September 1<sup>st</sup> (the start of the National Preparedness Month), the date to change to or from Daylight Savings Time, or some other easily remembered date.
  - Battery Check. Now ask them to unplug the AC cord from the back of the radio; if it still has a digital display, the batteries are OK. Have them re-plug the cord into the radio to conserve the batteries. A typical radio will last about three days when relying only on batteries. This is why it is important to have backup batteries during an emergency.
  - Write down the name, e-mail address and phone number of the person who will be the primary operator (most likely one of the main office staff workers)  
[Write name and phone number here for future reference]
- \_\_\_\_\_ . You will be calling this person for a radio check next week.

**After School Visit (Wednesday afternoon):**

- The National Weather Service broadcasts a test alert every Wednesday between the hours of 10:00 am and 12:00 noon. If there is a threat of severe weather or other ongoing emergency, the test will be postponed until the next good-weather day. Call your main contact person on Wednesday afternoon to ask whether or not the alarm was received at their school.
- Remind the school's operator of your name and contact information in case they have questions in the future.
- Keep abreast of the latest information regarding the program by monitoring the site: <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov> and acting as a resource to your adopted school.

Thank you for your time and service. Your important role contributes to the safety of our nation's school children.

National Office of Citizen Corps  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/National Weather Service  
U.S. Department of Commerce

Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools  
U.S. Department of Education